

RECLAMATION

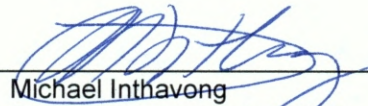
Managing Water in the West

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

East to West Transfers between Friant Division and South-of-Delta Central Valley Project Contractors, 2010 – 2011

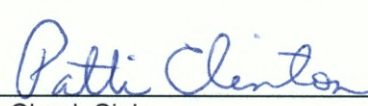
FONSI-10-26

Recommended by:


Michael Inthavong
Natural Resources Specialist
South-Central California Area Office

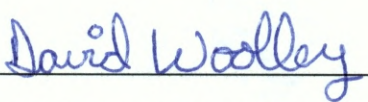
Date: 7/9/2010

Concurred by:

for 
Chuck Siek
Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist
South-Central California Area Office

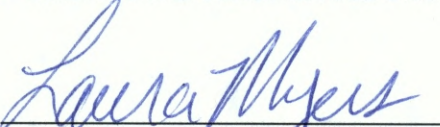
Date: 7/13/2010

Concurred by:


acting Chief, Resources Management Division
South-Central California Area Office

Date: 7/14/2010

Approved by:


Laura Myers
Deputy Area Manager
South-Central California Area Office

Date: 7/14/2010



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
South-Central California Area Office

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Introduction

In accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the South-Central California Area Office of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), has determined that the approval for transfers between Friant Division Central Valley Project (CVP) contractors to south-of-Delta CVP contractors is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment and an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is supported by Reclamation's Final Environmental Assessment (EA) number EA-10-26, *East to West Transfers between Friant Division and South-of-Delta Central Valley Project Contractors*, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

Reclamation provided the public with an opportunity to comment on the Draft FONSI and Draft EA from June 3, 2010 through July 2, 2010. No comments were received.

Background

The City of Fresno (CiF), Fresno Irrigation District (FID), and/or Orange Cove Irrigation District (OCID), hereto referred to as the "Transferring Districts", have agreed on the terms to transfer a portion of their Friant Division CVP water to SLWD and WWD, hereto referred to as the "Recipient Districts". The Proposed Action will include transfers of up to 57,500 acre-feet (AF) from the Transferring Districts to the Recipient Districts. More specifically, CiF will transfer up to 30,000 AF of their 2010 Friant Division CVP Class 1 water; FID will transfer up to 22,500 AF of their 2010 Friant Division CVP Class 2 water (to the extent Class 2 water is declared by Reclamation and is allocated to FID); and/or OCID will transfer up to 5,000 AF of their 2010 Friant Division CVP Class 1 water (together referred to as the "Transfer Water") to WWD and/or SLWD. The Transfer Water will be conveyed in existing facilities including those within the CVP and State Water Project (SWP), Cross Valley Canal (CVC), and/or other intermediate existing facilities. Since there are no conveyance facilities in place by which to accomplish direct delivery of the Transfer Water to the Recipient Districts, each of the transfers will be facilitated by exchange with Kern County Water Agency (KCWA), Santa Clara Valley Water District, and/or by utilizing recaptured flows stored in San Luis Reservoir (SLR) as a result of the San Joaquin River Restoration Interim Flows Project. The transfers will occur during the 2010 water year, with the completion of delivery occurring no later than February 29, 2012 (the end of the 2011 water year).

Findings

Water Resources

The Proposed Action will provide supplemental water supplies for the Recipient Districts in 2010 and 2011 to help deliver agricultural irrigation water to their customers within the appropriate places-of-use. It is anticipated that both 2010 and 2011 will be "dry" years and south-of-Delta CVP contractors will experience a reduction in their allocated contract supply; therefore, the Action will be beneficial to the Recipient Districts in meeting their in-district needs. The Transferring Districts currently have water available that is surplus to their respective immediate operational needs, and will still be able to adequately provide water to their

customers under the Proposed Action. There will be no significant impacts to the Recipient and Transferring Districts' water resources.

The CVC, CVP and SWP facilities will not be impacted as the Proposed Action must be scheduled and approved by Reclamation, KCWA and/or the Department of Water Resources. Additionally, the transfers must be conducted in a manner that will not harm other CVP contractors or other CVP contractual or environmental obligations, or SWP contractors. Therefore, normal operations of the conveyance facilities and obligations by the overseeing agencies to deliver water and other requirements will not be significantly impacted.

Water that has been made available as a result of recaptured San Joaquin River Restoration interim flows in SLR will be exchanged with the Transferring Districts for a like-amount of water in Millerton Lake. Other Friant Contractors, who have a supply of this water that has been recaptured, could be a potential exchange partner and will not experience a net gain or loss of water. Utilization of stored interim flows water in SLR will need to be coordinated with the program's oversight committee. The Proposed Action will have no significant impacts to the interim flows project or the river restoration program.

The Proposed Action will not increase groundwater pumping from what has historically occurred within the Kings Subbasin by the Transferring Districts. The transfers are made possible due to water that is surplus to the Transferring Districts' immediate operational needs. The small increase in water supply for the Recipient Districts will not add measurable groundwater in either the Westside and/or Delta-Mendota Subbasins, especially in view of the fact that most of the water will be efficiently applied and used by crops, with minimal amounts leaching below the root zone and into groundwater. There will be no significant impacts to groundwater resources.

Land Use

There will be no significant impacts to land use within the Transferring Districts as their water supplies will not be reduced below demands. There will be a slightly positive impact on agricultural land use within the Recipient Districts compared with to the No Action Alternative due to the ability of some established row crops to remain in production and the enhanced survival of orchards.

Biological Resources

Most of the habitat types required by species protected by the Endangered Species Act do not occur in the Proposed Action area. The Proposed Action will not involve the conversion of any land fallowed and untilled for three or more years. While the Proposed Action will reduce the fallowed acreage, it will not substantially change the land use patterns of the cultivated or fallowed fields that may have some value to listed species or to birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Since no natural stream courses will be utilized as part of the Proposed Action, there will be no effects on listed fish species. No critical habitat occurs within the area affected by the Proposed Action, so critical habitat will not be affected.

The relatively small amounts of water associated with the Proposed Action (when compared to the amount of water supply deficit) and the requirement that no native lands be converted without consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will preclude impacts to wildlife,

including federally listed species. Therefore, the Proposed Action will not significantly impact biological resources.

Cultural Resources

All transfers will occur through existing facilities and water will be provided within existing service area boundaries to areas that currently use water. The Proposed Action will not result in modification of any existing facilities, construction of new facilities, change in land use, or growth. The Proposed Action has no potential to cause effects to historic properties pursuant to the regulations at 36 CFR Part 800.3(a)(1), and will result in no significant impacts to cultural resources.

Indian Trust Assets (ITA)

Approval of the transfers between the Transferring Districts and the Recipient Districts will not involve any construction on lands or impact water, hunting, and fishing rights associated with the nearest Public Domain Allotment. Therefore, the Proposed Action does not have a potential to affect ITA.

Socioeconomic Resources

The Proposed Action will allow for water deliveries to be made to the Recipient Districts and will help maintain the stability of the agricultural market and economic vitality for the San Joaquin Valley to a certain degree. The transfers are temporary actions and will provide short-term beneficial impacts to socioeconomics.

Environmental Justice

The Proposed Action will reduce dislocation and promote continued employment within the affected environment. The Proposed Action will not disproportionately impact economically disadvantaged or minority populations. Employment opportunities for low-income wage earners and minority population groups will be within historical conditions; therefore, no significant impacts to environmental justice are expected.

Air Quality

Under the Proposed Action, movement of water between Transferring Districts and other potential exchange partners will be done via gravity flow and/or pumped using electric motors which have no emissions. There are no emissions from electrical motors and so a conformity analysis is not required under the Clean Air Act. Therefore, no significant impacts to air quality will result from implementing the Proposed Action.

Global Climate

Green house gases (GHG) generated by the Proposed Action is expected to be extremely small since the transfer of water will be conveyed mostly via gravity and little, if any, additional pumping from electric motors will be required. While any increase in GHG emissions will add to the global inventory of gases that will contribute to global climate change, the Proposed Action will result in potentially minimal increases in GHG emissions and a net increase in GHG emissions among the pool of GHG will not be detectable. No significant impacts to global climate are expected as a result of the Proposed Action.

Cumulative Impacts

The Proposed Action was found to have no adverse impacts on water, biological, and cultural resources, ITA and environmental justice. The Proposed Action is a one-time, temporary action, and when added to other actions do not contribute to cumulative adverse impacts to existing environmental conditions. Slight beneficial impacts to land use and socioeconomics are short-term and will be within historical variations, and will not contribute to cumulative impacts.

It is also reasonably foreseeable that the Recipient Districts will receive additional transfers from others as described in Section 3.10 in the EA. The Recipient Districts' other similar existing and foreseeable actions will have the same impacts as the Proposed Action since all are transfers and/or exchanges will utilize existing conveyance facilities. Coordination to schedule the deliveries for all these actions will be required with the appropriate overseeing agency to ensure that the normal operations of the facilities involved will not be hindered. Overall, there will be no significant cumulative impacts from the Proposed Action and other related projects.